

The Block



to Build On

School counselors will soon have the cornerstone they need to begin building a results-based comprehensive school counseling program.

BY TRISH HATCH AND JUDY BOWERS

As we head further into the 21st century, school counselors continue to define new directions for the profession. In understanding the school counseling profession's future, however, it's crucial to understand its past. At the turn of the 20th century, school counselors didn't even exist. Instead, teachers used a few minutes of their time to offer vocational guidance to students preparing for work in a democratic society.

The school mission of 2002 is not altogether different than in the 1900s. Today, in a world enriched by diversity and technology, school counselors' chief mission is still supporting the academic achievement of all students so they are prepared for life beyond school. However, school counselors no longer work in isolation; instead, they are professionals, integral to the total educational program. This evolution from minutes a day to trained professionals implementing a comprehensive school counseling program did not take place without professional scholars and counselors having the vision, knowledge and determination to move forward.



School counseling training programs have had conflicting and varied theoretical perspectives. Consequently, within the field we have programs that have trained counselors differently. School counselors began as vocational counselors nearly 100 years ago, and the profession has evolved to address all children in the comprehensive domains of academic, career and personal/social development. During this evolution, differing philosophical perspectives developed between and among academic counselors, career counselors and personal/social or mental health counselors regarding school counselors' role, function, purpose and focus. In the 1960s, the National Defense Education Act encouraged the directive approach to counseling. However, coinciding with this movement was Carl Rogers' nondirective approach to counseling. Counselors trained in programs rooted in psychological and clinical paradigms differed greatly from those rooted in educational paradigms. These changes

and varying models confused school counselors, school administrators, teachers and parents.

Current Challenges

In 1992, Phyllis Hart and Marilyn Jacobi wrote "From Gatekeeper to Advocate: Transforming the Role of the School Counselor." This book was shared widely as part of ASCA's leadership development training. It also served as an anchor document in The Education Trust's design and development of the Readers Digest-DeWitt Wallace Foundation effort to transform the training of school counselors. One of the chapters in the book discusses the six problems in school counseling programs: lack of basic philosophy, poor integration, insufficient student access, inadequate guidance for some students, lack of counselor accountability and failure to utilize other resources.

Throughout history, school counselors have complained about the assignment of quasi-administrative

and noncounseling duties. The school counseling profession has continued to struggle with this issue while attempting to institutionalize the appropriate role of the counselors. However, just as pre-service training has varied for counselors, so too have administrative expectations for school counselors based on administrative pre-service training (or lack of it) with regard to school counseling programs. As a result, school counselors often are assigned additional responsibilities, such as:

- Master schedule duties
- Testing coordinators
- Classroom coverage
- Discipline
- Clerical responsibilities

For decades, the school counseling profession has been responding to the question, "What do counselors do?" However, that question has only served to confuse our profession depending on which model one was trained in or loyal to. Instead, the new and more important question is: "How are students different

Active Parenting

because of what school counselors do?" School counselors can no longer ask the principal on the first day, "What would you like me to do?" Instead, school counselors must be trained and educated to inform the administrator of the contributions they plan to make to all of the students in the school.

One Vision One Voice

As the next logical step to after developing national standards, ASCA's Governing Board, at its March 2001 meeting, agreed to develop of a national program model. The National Model for School Counseling Programs maximizes the full potential of the standards documents and reflects current education reform movements, including the No Child Left Behind legislation, which mandates all federally funded programs be accountable for and directly connected to student learning and student improvement.

The decision to hold a National Summit to create a National Model for School Counseling Programs was a

decision ASCA made to bring the leaders in the field together and create One Vision, One Voice for all counselors. ASCA moved forward to develop the model to address the historical concerns, the current challenges and to help practicing school counselors plan for the future of their programs and the profession through one common lens. The model provides the mechanism with which school counselors and school counseling teams will design, coordinate, implement, manage and evaluate their programs for students' success.

The National Model for School Counseling Programs is written to reflect a comprehensive approach to program foundation, delivery, management and accountability. It provides a framework for the program components, the school counselor's role in implementation and the underlying philosophies of leadership, advocacy and systemic change. School counselors switch their emphasis from service-centered for some of the students to program-centered for every student.

It not only answers the question: "What do school counselors do?" but further, it requires us to respond to the question, "How are students different as a result of what we do?"

School counseling programs are designed to ensure that every student receives the benefits of the program. Historically, many school counselors spent 80 percent of their time responding to the needs of 20 percent of their students, typically the high achieving or high risk. The National Model for School Counseling Programs recommends 80 percent of the school counselor's time be spent in direct service to all students so that every student receives the program benefits.

The National Model incorporates school counseling standards and competencies for every student, which serve as the foundation for the program and focus the direction for an organized, planned, sequential and flexible school counseling curriculum. The model uses disaggregated data to drive program

National Beta Club

and activity development, thus enabling school counselors to intentionally design interventions to meet the needs of all students and to close the gap between specific groups of students and their peers. The model emphasizes an organizational framework and accountability systems to determine how well students have met the standards or have achieved intended outcomes. The school counseling program reduces confusion, aligns goals and objectives with the school's mission and ultimately leads to student achievement as demonstrated by results data.

The National Model serves as a template for the development of a school counseling program; it is not meant for exact replication. Because attention to local demographic needs and political conditions are necessary for effective school counseling program development, the National Model is meant to integrate with and adapt to the school's current program. There is no one "ideal program" that can or should be used as a cookie cutter throughout the nation.

Rather, ASCA's goal is to provide school counselors with a document that will institutionalize the framework of a comprehensive school counseling program.

Leadership skills are critical to the successful implementation of new or remodeled programs at the school, district and state levels. School counselors are change agents, collaborators and advocates. As school counselors become proficient in retrieving and analyzing school data to improve student success, they ensure educational equity for every student. Using strong communication, consultation and political skills, school counselors collaborate with other professionals in the school building to influence systemic change and advocate for every student.

Learning from the past is critical in developing a new school counseling program. Analyses of the program based upon program audits, current research and trends is imperative, and school counselors must recognize if change is needed – and be prepared

to make it – no matter how comfortable the status quo or how difficult or uncomfortable that change may be.

Model Development

From the first stages of development, the National Model has called upon the expertise of national leaders and practicing school counselors. Development began with a summit in June 2001, where the framework was developed. The resulting model included the basic content of the four major components: foundation, delivery system, management system and accountability. Advocacy, leadership and systemic change are integrated into the model and provide strong support for implementation of the model.

During October and November 2001, the first full draft of the model was used in a training with school counselors and administrators from seven different districts in the Riverside County, Calif. Since that time, the draft has been reviewed by school counseling leaders,

Corinthian College

summit participants and ASCA's National Model Committee. The first edition contains the National Model's main concepts and components. Subsequent published documents will include hands-on samples and worksheets to assist counselors and college educators with initial program design and/or revision of their school counseling program and implementation.

To date, the executive summary of ASCA's National Model for School Counseling Programs has been presented to and well received by ASCA's Governing Board, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, the American Counseling Association, the ERIC/CASS Comprehensive Competency-Based Guidance Workshop, and state conferences and workshops in Arizona, California, New York, North Carolina, Oregon and Wisconsin.

In early May, the original summit participants met again to review and revise the model and plan the next steps

for member dissemination and training.

The model will officially be unveiled during ASCA's conference in Miami in June. ASCA will be looking to the members for comment on this final draft. Keynote conference speakers include leaders in the school counseling field who attended the initial model development summit meeting: Norm Gysbers, Ph.D., University of Missouri; Clarence "Curly" Johnson, Ph.D., retired; and Robert Myrick, Ph.D., University of Florida. Several conference sessions have been devoted to providing an overview of the model. Additionally, an intensive three-hour workshop is scheduled. The final document will be available online and through the ASCA bookstore in early 2003. ASCA trainers will continue to present the model to interested professional and state associations.

As ASCA is sharing information on the National Model for School Counseling Programs on a national level, we hope you will share this article with members of your school team in

anticipation of the model's release.

Engaging administrators early in the process is important, as they will be a partner in program design and development. As the school counseling department moves forward with implementation, it will be important to keep the school board, staff and stakeholders informed and involved. Remember, the school counseling program belongs to the school, and the support of all team members is vital. ✍

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Career & Education Network

Elements of ASCA's National Model for School Counseling Programs

Foundation

The program's foundation serves as the solid ground upon which the rest of the program is built. The decisions made during this process become the "what" of the program. Designing a strong foundation requires effort and conviction to determine what every student will receive as a benefit of a school counseling program.

Beliefs and philosophy: The philosophy is a set of principles (usually a set of "we agree statements") that guides the program development, implementation and evaluation. All personnel involved in managing and implementing the program must agree on each belief or guiding principle in the philosophy.

Mission: A mission statement describes the program's purpose and provides the vision of what is desired for every student. A school counseling program mission statement aligns with and is a subset of the school and district missions.

Domains: The School Counseling Program facilitates student development in three broad domains—academic, career and personal/social—to promote and enhance the learning process. Domains are the extension of the mission and focus on the results students will achieve by the time they graduate.

ASCA National Standards/competencies: ASCA's National Standards/competencies are the foundation for the National Model. Student competencies define the knowledge, attitudes or skills students should obtain or demonstrate

as a result of participating in a school counseling program. They are developed and organized into content areas.

Delivery System

The delivery system, which is intertwined with the management system, describes the activities, interactions and areas in which counselors work to deliver the program. It is the "how" of the implementation process, and the management system addresses

Guidance curriculum: The guidance curriculum component consists of structured developmental lessons designed to help students achieve the competencies and is presented systematically through classroom and group activities K-12. The guidance curriculum provides every student the knowledge and skills appropriate for the developmental level.

Individual planning with students: This component consists of school counselors coordinating ongoing systemic activities designed to assist the individual student in establishing personal goals and developing future plans.

Responsive services: This component consists of activities to meet students' immediate needs. These needs require counseling, consultation, referral, peer mediation or information.

Systems support: The systems support component consists of the administration and management activities that establish, maintain and enhance the total guidance program.



Management Systems

The management system addresses the “when, why, by whom and on what authority” of the program. The program management is organized, concrete, clearly delineated and reflective of the school site’s needs.

Management agreements: School counselor/administrator agreements include statements of responsibilities by each school counselor, specifying the results the school counselor is accountable for achieving during the year. Agreements also include how the school counselors divide the program responsibilities. These agreements are negotiated with and approved by designated administrators at the beginning of each school year.

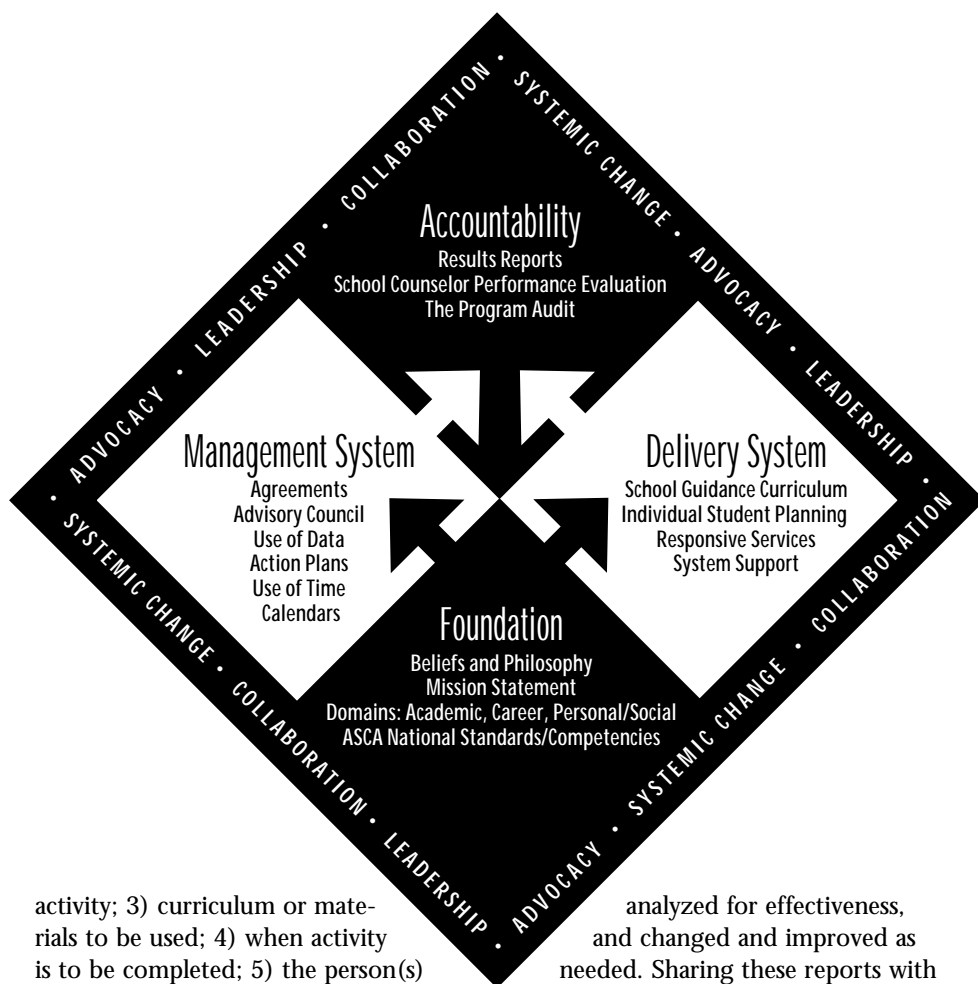
Use of data: A comprehensive school counseling program is data driven. The use of data to effect change within the school system is integral to ensuring that every student receives the benefits of the school counseling program. School counselors must show that each activity implemented as part of the program was developed from a careful analysis of students’ needs, achievement and/or related data.

Student monitoring: Monitoring students’ progress ensures all students receive what they need to achieve success in school by monitoring student achievement data, achievement related data and standards and competency related data. Collection, analysis and interpretation of student achievement data may be systemic by district or specific to school site, grade, class or individual.

Closing the gap: The use of data drives the program. The needs surface when disaggregated data are analyzed for every student. Data are necessary to determine where you are, where you should be and where you are going. Needs are the identified discrepancies between the desired results and the results currently being achieved.

Action plans: For every competency and result desired, school counselors must develop an action plan. Guidance curriculum action plans include:

- 1) the domain, standard and competency addressed;
- 2) description of actual



activity; 3) curriculum or materials to be used; 4) when activity is to be completed; 5) the person(s) responsible for the delivery; 6) the means of evaluating student success (i.e. process or outcome data); and 7) the expected result for student(s). Closing the gap action plans also describe the data driving the decisions addressed in this competency.

Use of time/calendars: Counselors determine the amount of time to spend in each area of the delivery system. Then they develop and publish master and weekly calendars to ensure students, parents, teachers and administrators know what is scheduled. This helps in planning and ensures active program participation.

Accountability

Accountability and evaluation of the school counseling program are absolute necessities. Now more than ever, school counselors are challenged to demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs and must collect data supporting and linking the school counseling programs to students’ academic success.

Results reports: Results reports, which include process, perception and results data, ensure programs are carried out,

analyzed for effectiveness, and changed and improved as needed. Sharing these reports with stakeholders serves as an advocacy for the students and the program. School counselors should collect and analyze immediate, intermediate and long-range results.

School counselor performance evaluation: The school counselor’s performance evaluation contains basic standards of practice expected of school counselors implementing a school counseling program. These performance standards serve as both a basis for counselor evaluation and as a means for counselor self-evaluation.

Program audit/evaluation: The program audit provides evidence of the program’s alignment with ASCA’s National Model for School Counseling Programs. The primary purpose for collecting information is to guide future action within the program and to improve future results for students.

Advisory council: An advisory council is a group of people appointed to review guidance program results and to make recommendations. The group representatives are students, parents, teachers, school counselors, administration and community members.